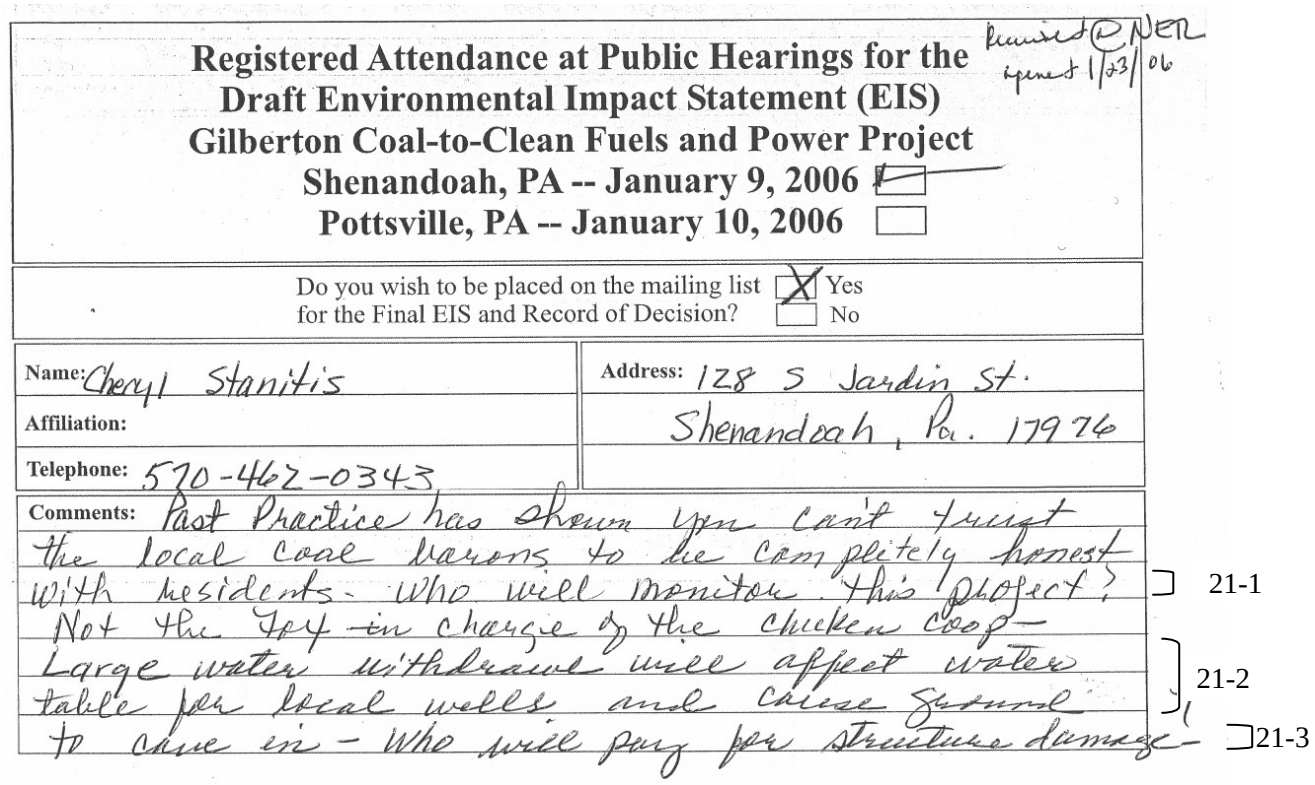


Registered Attendance at Public Hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Gilberton Coal-to-Clean Fuels and Power Project

Shenandoah, PA -- January 9, 2006 ☒

Pottsville, PA -- January 10, 2006 ☐

Received @ NETL August 1/23/06

Do you wish to be placed on the mailing list for the Final EIS and Record of Decision? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Name: Cheryl Stanitis

Affiliation:

Telephone: 570-462-0343

Address: 128 S Jardin St. Shenandoah, Pa. 17976

Comments: Past Practice has shown you can't trust the local coal barons to be completely honest with residents - Who will monitor this project? Not the fox in charge of the chicken coop — Large water withdrawal will affect water table for local wells and cause ground to cave in - Who will pay for structure damage —

21-1

21-2

21-3

Stanitis, Cheryl (21)

Comment 21-1
"Who will monitor this project? Not the fox in charge of the chicken coop."

Response:
Although DOE does not serve as a regulatory agency, if DOE decides to provide financial assistance, then DOE would expect WMPI PTY., LLC, to follow all applicable federal, state, and local environmental regulations. From a project management perspective, DOE will monitor the project through the terms of a financial assistance agreement.

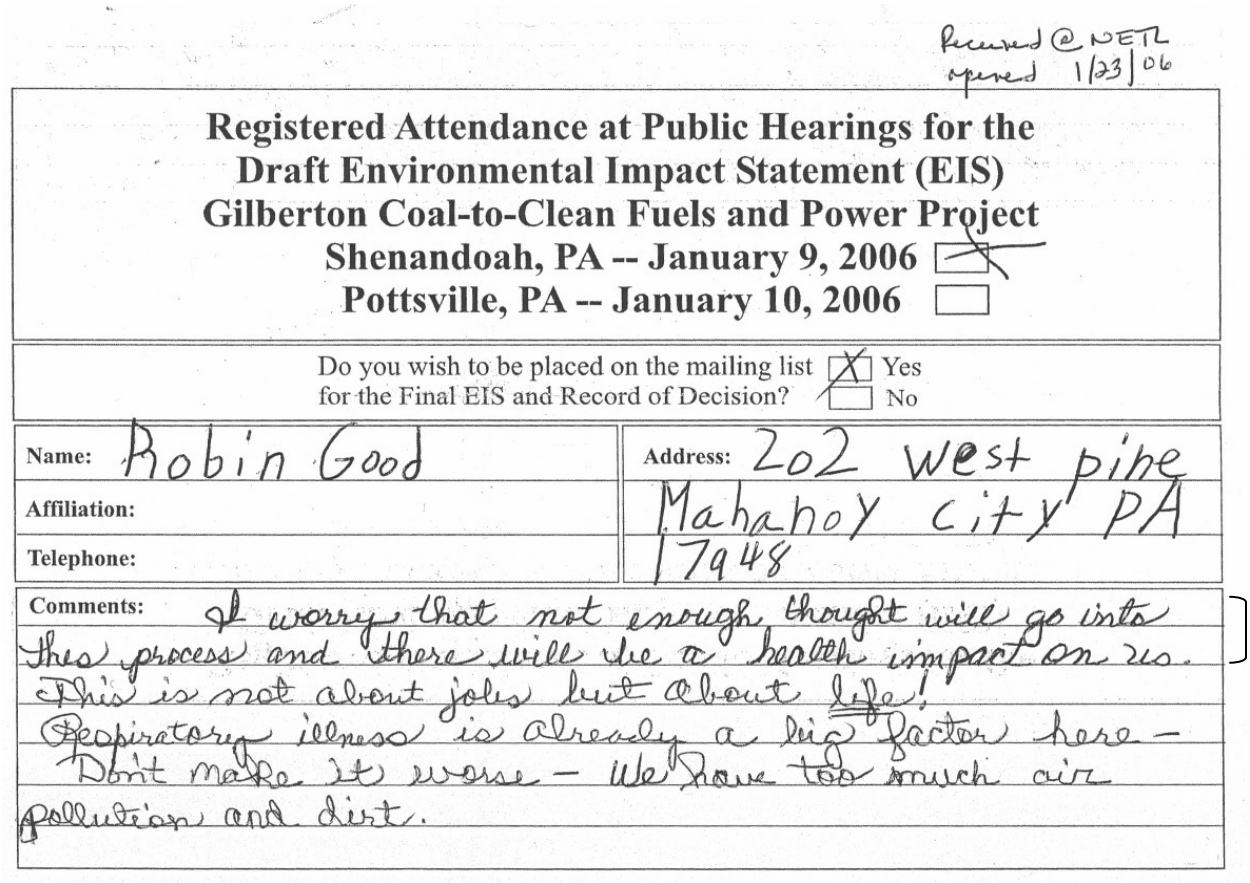
Comment 21-2
"Large water withdrawal will affect water table for local wells and cause the ground to cave in –"

Response:
Withdrawal of groundwater from the Gilberton mine pool would not affect the elevation of the water table in aquifers that supply local water-supply wells. The aquifers that supply water to local water-supply wells, such as the wells on Broad Mountain, receive recharge from precipitation that falls on upland areas near the wells. Groundwater moves from the uplands toward the valleys, and withdrawal of water from valley mine pools does not affect water levels in the upland aquifers. See Sections 3.4.2 and 4.1.4.2 for additional information.

The potential for cave-ins and other forms of ground surface subsidence over the Gilberton mine pool is discussed in Section 4.1.3.3. Also see the responses to comments P11-4 and P11-5.

Comment 21-3
"[W]ho will pay for structure damage?"

Response:
Liability for damage to property resulting from the project would be determined by applicable law. Also see the response to comment P11-5.



Received @ NETL
opened 1/23/06

Registered Attendance at Public Hearings for the
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)
Gilberton Coal-to-Clean Fuels and Power Project
Shenandoah, PA -- January 9, 2006 [X]
Pottsville, PA -- January 10, 2006 [ ]

Do you wish to be placed on the mailing list for the Final EIS and Record of Decision? [X] Yes [ ] No

Name: Robin Good	Address: 202 west pine
Affiliation:	Mahanoy city PA
Telephone:	17948

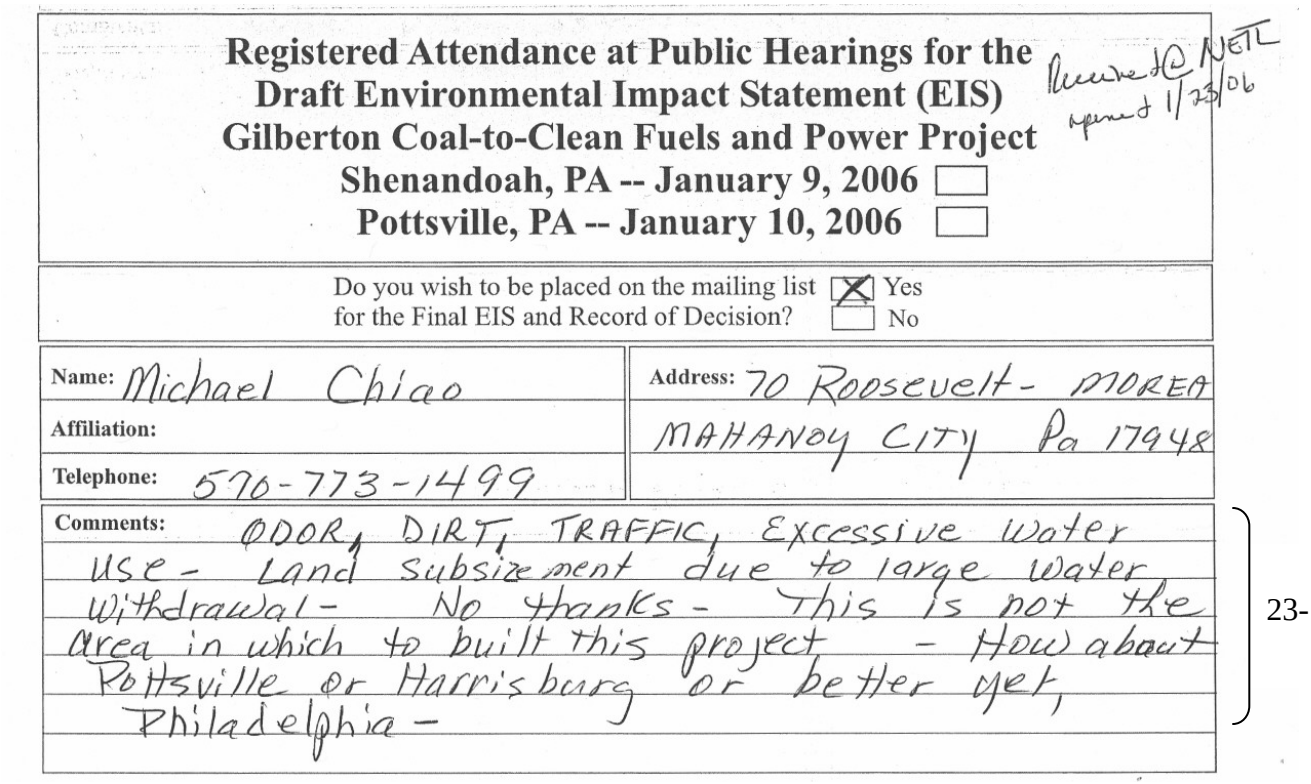
Comments: I worry that not enough thought will go into this process and there will be a health impact on us. This is not about jobs but about life! Respiratory illness is already a big factor here - Don't make it worse - We have too much air pollution and dirt.

22-1

Good, Robin (22)

Comment 22-1
"I worry that not enough thought will go into this process and there will be a health impact on us. This is not about jobs but about life!"

Response:
The comment is noted. Potential impacts to human health are discussed in Section 4.1.9, Human Health and Safety, of the EIS.



Registered Attendance at Public Hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Gilberton Coal-to-Clean Fuels and Power Project

Received @ NETL 1/25/06

Shenandoah, PA -- January 9, 2006 ☐

Pottsville, PA -- January 10, 2006 ☐

Do you wish to be placed on the mailing list for the Final EIS and Record of Decision? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Name: Michael Chiao	**Address:** 70 Roosevelt - MOREA
Affiliation:	MAHANOY CITY Pa 17948
Telephone: 570-773-1499	

Comments: ODOR, DIRT, TRAFFIC, Excessive water use - Land Subsizement due to large water withdrawal - No thanks - This is not the area in which to built this project - How about Pottsville or Harrisburg or better yet, Philadelphia -

23-1

Chiao, Michael (23)

Comment 23-1

"Odor, dirt, traffic, excessive water use – land subsidence due to large withdrawal – no thanks – this is not the area in which to build this project. How about Pottsville or Harrisburg or better yet, Philadelphia –"

Response:

The comment has been noted.

Janice Bell - EIS

From: "nankess" <nankess@ptd.net>
To: <jbell@netl.doe.gov>
Date: 1/23/2006 1:10 PM
Subject: EIS

Regarding the Coal -to -Clean Fuels Plant, I disagree that the plant should be given a permit on the gounds that there is a great risk of health and enviroment impact on the people living around the area of the plant. If there is a catastrophey there is no way to stop it and our water and air are in danger. There is absolutely no reason to build a plant because the end does not justify the means. Why take a chance with peoples health because somebody wants to make money. Also we we can do without the jobs that the plant would produce, we are doing without them now. Please do not give them the permit to build the plant. Thank you.

24-1

nankess@ptd.net (24)

Comment 24-1

"Regarding the Coal-to-Clean Fuels Plant, I disagree that the plant should be given a permit on the grounds that there is a great risk of health and environmental impact on the people living around the area of the plant. If there is a catastrophe there is no way to stop it and our water and air are in danger. There is absolutely no reason to build a plant because the end does not justify the means. Why take a chance with people's health because somebody

wants to make money. Also, we can do without the jobs that the plant would produce; we are doing without them now. Please do not give them the permit to build the plant.

Response:

Sections 4.1.9.1 and 4.1.7.5 discuss the Risk Management Plans and other measures that would be taken to protect the public from potential accidents associated with the proposed facility.

MS 58/247A

Received @ NETL, opened 1/23/06

MR. GEORGE GAYDOSH
116 ROOSEVELT DRIVE
MOREA
MAHANOY CITY, PA 17948-3210

JANUARY 18, 2006

JANICE L. BELL
M/S 58-247A
NATIONAL ENERGY TECHNOLOGY LABORATORY
PO BOX 10940
PITTSBURGH, PA 15236-0940

DEAR MS. BELL;

AFTER REVIEWING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY'S DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE GILBERTON COAL-TO-COAL AND CLEAN FUELS AND POWER PROJECT (DOE/EIS-0351) I AND MANY OF THE RESIDENTS OF MOREA, PA DISAPPROVE OF THIS PROPOSED ACTION TO BUILD AND OPERATE THIS PLANT IN OUR VICINITY AND THE POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS IT WILL BRING TO OUR AREA. THE SUMARRIES IN THE DRAFT ARE TOO IFFY! 25-1

WE HAVE PUT UP WITH THE EFFECTS AND HAZARDS OF A CO-GEN (WHEELABRATOR) PLANT WEST OF MOREA OF WHICH THE EMISSIONS OF THEIR BOILER HAVE BEEN ANALYZED BY, ASSUMING EPA, AND CALLED IT RESIDUE FROM THE SURROUNDING

(1)

MS 58/247 A

TREES, WHICH IN FACT IS IRON OXIDE POLLUTING THE AIR LEAVING A REDDISH COATING ON OUR HOMES AND CARS, AND THE AIR WE BREATHE!!

THE EPA STUDY IS FLAWED IN MANY RESPECTS. THE BURNERS (CYCLONES) ARE STEAM-COOLED. THE STEAM-COOLED BURNERS OFFERS THE ADVANTAGE OF LESS REFACTORY MAINTENANCE IN THE BOILER OPERATION, BUT HAS A HIGHER CAPITAL COST. I REALIZE THERE ARE LARGE AMOUNTS OF ASH IN THE WASTE-COAL PARTICLES.

THE GILBERTON CO-GEN SITE SEEMS TO BE USING WATER TO WASH THE CULM. THIS WATER COULD HAVE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES IF NOT PROPERLY CONTAINED. ALSO THE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES WITH THE ASH STORAGE MAY ALSO BE A WATER AND DUST ISSUE IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. 25-2 25-3

I BELIEVE THE EPA SHOULD ASK THE CO-GEN (WHEELABRATOR) AND THE CO-GEN (GILBERTON) STATIONS SHOULD ASK THESE PLANTS TO INSTALL "HEAT RECOVERY BLOWDOWN CONTROLS" TO REDUCE BLOWDOWN STEAM EMISSIONS. THE PLANTS INVOLVED SHOULD PUT THESE CONTROLS ON THEIR CFB BOILERS AS WELL AS THE NEW PROPOSED STATION. THIS SHOULD BE A MATTER FOR PUBLIC APPROVAL AS WELL AS ANY PROPOSED ROAD UPGRADES AND

(2)

MS 58/247A

AND PROPOSED BEAUTIFICATION PROJECTS.
THE GILBERTON COAL-TO-COAL AND CLEAN FUELS AND POWER PROJECT SAY THEY WOULD EVALUATE ALTERNATIVE FEEDSTOCKS (OUTSIDE SUPPLY) FOR ECONOMIC PURPOSES AND FUEL FLEXIBILITY INCLUDING ANTHRACITE AND BITUMINOUS COALS (FROM PITTSBURGH TO KENTUCKY?) PLUS MIXTURES CONTAINING PETROLEUM COKE (OIL PROCESSING PLANT). WILL THIS BE TRUCKED IN?
I BELIEVE MY UNDERSTANDING IS THE FLUXANT AS WELL AS THE PETROLEUM COKE WILL BE DELIVERED BY TRUCK.
THIS WILL INCREASE THE TRUCK TRAFFIC FLOW!
HOW MANY TRUCKS WILL BE REQUIRED TO REMOVE THE HIGH SULPHUR (PETROLEUM COKE AND HIGHER SULPHUR CONTENT OF COAL)? WILL THIS REQUIRE MORE TRUCKS TO REMOVE FROM THE SITE???

25-4

IT IS MENTIONED THE COAL REACTS IN THE GASIFIER WITH OXYGEN AND STEAM TO SYNGAS. THE MINERAL COMPOUNDS OF THE COAL FORM LIQUID SLAG AND A CERTAIN PART OF FLY ASH.
SLAG AND ASH HAS ARSENIC AND MERCURY IN IT. WHERE IS THE SLAG/ASH GOING.??. WHERE IS THE WASTE WATER FLY ASH, SLAG, SLAG FINES GOING? WILL IT BE TRUCKED OUT?

25-5

(3)

MS 58/247A

I BELIEVE A BIG PROBLEM IS TRANSPORTATION OF THE SOLIDS. THIS WOULD REQUIRE OPTIMUM TRAFFIC CONCEPT AND THE SITE CONNECTION TO THE PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE.

IT HAS BEEN NOTED THAT THIS PROPOSED PLANT WILL CREATE HIGH-QUALITY-JOBS. THIS IS NO CONCERN TO WE SENIOR CITIZENS WOULD LIKE TO RETIRE IN PEACE AND NOT HAVE THE TENSIONS WHICH WOULD BE CREATED BY FIVE HUNDRED MORE CARS ADDING TO THE CONFUSION AND CONGESTION IN THE AREA! WE HAVE ONLY ONE POLICEMAN IN MAHANOY TOWNSHIP TO HANDLE ANY PROBLEMS WHICH MAY OCCUR! WE DO NOT APPROVE OF THIS PLANT IN OUR LOCATION!! 25-6

EVERY TEST THUS FAR TAKEN IS TOO IFFY TO EVEN CONSIDER THIS UNDERTAKING.

I'M ALSO SURMISING THAT THE COAL-GASIFICATION CHAR/ASH WOULD BE BURNED AT THE CO-GEN (WHEELABRATOR) CFB BOILER!

STUDIES (MORE ACCURATE) SHOULD BE PERFORMED ON WATER QUALITY USEAGE AND TRANSPORTATION NOT GUESSTAMATES! 25-7

(4)

MS 58/247A

THE PA STATE GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUBMIT PLANS FOR A FOUR LANE ROAD TO I-81. UPGRADE I-81 INTERCHANGE, BEAUTIFICATION OF SURROUNDING AREAS, NOT TO LOOK LIKE A RUN-DOWN INDUSTRIAL PARK. THE SMOKESTACKS ARE NOT PLEASANT TO LOOK AT. WHAT LANDSCAPING? WHAT BENEFIT TO THE COMMUNITY? TAX BASE (FOR WHO?) CO-GEN (HOT WATER, STEAM FOR LOCALS).

PLEASE, DEAR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DOE, I APPEAL TO YOU AS DO THE RESIDENTS OF A LITTLE QUITE VILLAGE CALLED MOREA, PA. DO NOT APPROVE THIS TEST REFINERY IN OUR AREA. WE DO NOT NEED ANY MORE DEADLY TOXINS TO CONTAMINATE OUR AIR AND THE LUNGS OF OUR LITTLE CHILDREN AND GRAND CHILDREN. 25-8

WITH DEEPEST REGARDS,

George J. Gaydosh

GEORGE J. GAYDOSH

P.S. - I WAS OPERATED ON FOR COLON CANCER 6 MOS. AGO AND CONTINUE HEAVY CHEMOTHERAPY! WILL I HAVE MORE CANCER CONCERNS!!!

(5)

Gaydosh, George (25)

Comment 25-1

"After reviewing the U. S. Department of Energy's Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Gilberton Coal-to-Coal and Clean Fuels and Power Project (DOE/EIS-0557), I and many of the residents of Morea, PA DISAPPROVE of this proposed action to build and operate this plant in our vicinity and the potential environmental hazards it will bring to our area."

Response:

The comment has been noted.

Comment 25-2

"The Gilberton Co-Gen Site seems to be using water to wash the culm. This water could have environmental issues if not properly contained."

Response:

The existing Gilberton Power Plant does, in fact, draw mine pool water to wash the culm, in its beneficiation plant, based on a water withdrawal permit from the Susquehanna River Basin Commission. Wastewater from the beneficiation plant is sent directly to the tailings pond which is believed to seep into the Boston Run mine pool. Similarly, the proposed facilities would also require the use of the mine pool water for culm beneficiation. About 1,667 gpm of water would be withdrawn from the Gilberton mine pool for beneficiation; this includes operation of the existing beneficiation plant. As a result, about 1,180 gpm of wastewater would be discharged to the tailings pond from culm beneficiation. These effluents are expected to seep downward from the tailings pond to the Boston Run mine pool. It is anticipated that facility effluents discharged would return to the mine pool system with near neutral pH and less acidity and lower dissolved metal concentration than were contained in the water withdrawn from the mine pool system. It is reasonable to assume that the concentrations of dissolved solids in the beneficiation effluents from this facility and from the new or expanded facility would be similar to or slightly higher than the concentration found in the mine pool water used for the beneficiation process. Suspended solids, such as coal fines and rock particles would be present in this effluent. The EIS has been revised to include expanded discussion of how water from the culm beneficiation would affect the environment, See Section 4.1.4.1. In addition, the discussion of cumulative effects has been expanded to address the water usage from the existing power plants in the area and the proposed plant. A comparison of the key operating characteristics of the Gilberton Plant and the proposed facilities is contained in Table 2.1.6.

Comment 25-3

"Also, the environmental issues with the ash storage may also be water and dust issue in the foreseeable future."

Response:

The existing Gilberton Power Plant currently burns about 640,000 tons of anthracite culm per year, which consists of rock and coal with varying amounts of carbon material remaining after removal of the higher-quality saleable coal. Bottom ash and fly ash are currently sold for use as road aggregate or used to restore land modified by strip mining. For the proposed facilities, based on an 85% capacity factor and a design basis that assumes beneficiated culm

would contain only 20% ash, the proposed facilities would be anticipated to produce 250,000 tons of coarse slag and 62,500 tons per year of fine solids. Following gasification, solidified slag would be crushed and discharged as a wet mixture to minimize dust issues. It would be managed according to Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection residual waste regulations. Coarse slag would either be sold as a marketable byproduct, used for restoration of a site where culm had been removed, or used for local mine reclamation. Fine solids would be fed back into the gasifier or sent to the adjacent valley on the industrial participant's land that is permitted for ash disposal. Further information on the management of solid residues is provided in Section 4.1.8.2. In addition, Section 5.1.3 discusses the impacts of solid wastes during commercial operation of the facility.

Comment 25-4

"I believe my understanding is the fluxant as well as the petroleum coke will be delivered by truck."

THIS WILL INCREASE THE TRUCK TRAFFIC FLOW! How many trucks will be required to remove the high sulfur (petroleum coke and higher sulfur content of coal)? Will THIS REQUIRE MORE TRUCKS TO REMOVE FROM THE SITE?"

Response:

The proposed facilities would be capable of using a blend of feedstock containing up to 25% petroleum coke. Using anthracite culm as feedstock, the proposed facilities would annually produce approximately 4,000 tons of elemental sulfur, which would be trucked off the site to be sold as a byproduct. Approximately one round-trip truck trip (to and from the site) would be required each day. Because petroleum coke has a higher sulfur content than anthracite culm, as many as 7 round trips per day would be needed to remove the sulfur if coke was used as part of the feedstock. Section 4.1.7.8 has been revised to include this number of truck trips.

Comment 25-5

"Where is the slag/ash going? Where is the waste water, fly ash, slag, slag fines going? Will it be trucked out?"

Response:

Management of solid residues from the proposed facilities is discussed in Sections 2.1.6.3 and 4.1.8.2. Solidified slag would be used commercially or in mine reclamation. Fine solids would either be fed back into the gasifier as a supplemental fuel or disposed on previously mined land as part of mine reclamation. Disposal in a commercial landfill would be a potential option for residual solid materials not suitable for these uses. It is expected that trucks would be used for offsite transportation of residual solid materials. Also see the response to comment 11-7.

Some water would be retained in the slag and transported offsite. Water drained from slag would be mixed with stormwater runoff and other site effluents, managed in onsite wastewater facilities, and discharged to the tailings pond, as discussed in Sections 2.1.6.2 and 4.1.8.2.

Comment 25-6

"We do not approve of this plant in our location!"

Response:
The comment has been noted.

Comment 25-7A
I'm also surmising that the coal-gasification char/ash would be burned at the co-gen (Wheelabrator) CFB boiler!

Response:
No residues from the proposed facility would be processed at the Wheelabrator cogeneration facility mentioned by the commenter.

Comment 25-7B
"Studies (more accurate) should be performed on water quality usage and transportation not guesstamates!"

Response:
WMPI has not completed the detailed engineering design and process testing necessary to allow precise estimates of some facility resource requirements and operating parameters. Accordingly, assessment of impacts in the EIS is based on estimates. Note that environmental regulatory agencies such as Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection would require more detailed information for review before issuing permits and approvals. Also see the response to comment S2-1.

Comment 25-8
"Please, dear assistant secretary of DOE, I appeal to you as do the residents of a little quiet village called Morea, PA, do not approve this test refinery in our area. We do not need any more deadly toxins to contaminate our air and the lungs of our children and grandchildren."

Response:
The comment has been noted.

NRDC
THE EARTH'S BEST DEFENSE

NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL

February 7, 2006

Janice L Bell
National Environmental Policy Act Document Manager
U.S. Department of Energy
National Energy Technology Laboratory
626 Cochrans Mill Road
P.O. Box 10940
Pittsburgh, PA 15236-0940

Re: Comments on Draft EIS for the Gilberton, PA, Waste Coal Plant

Dear Ms. Bell,

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) appreciates this opportunity to comment on the environmental impact statement (EIS) conducted by the US Department of Energy (DOE) regarding the proposed combined cycle coal plant in Gilberton, PA. [*See:* 70 Fed. Reg., 73003 (Dec 8, 2005).] NRDC is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to protecting the global environment and preserving the Earth's natural resources. *See* www.nrdc.org. Thirty thousand of NRDC's six hundred and fifty thousand members reside in Pennsylvania.

NRDC has two primary areas of concern with the draft EIS. First, the draft EIS dismisses carbon dioxide (CO_2) emissions from the plant as insignificant based upon reasons that do not reflect the true impact on the climate of releasing CO_2 into the atmosphere and that ignore obligations of the federal government to factor climate change considerations into significant actions such as this proposal to provide federal financial assistance to stimulate the development of a coal-to-liquids industry. Second, the draft EIS does not provide a sufficient discussion of compliance with several relevant National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements regarding both DOE's Clean Coal Power Initiative (CCPI) and the specific technologies proposed for the Gilberton plant. The project and program outlined in the EIS will result in significant increases in greenhouse gas emissions from the production and use of transportation fuels yet the EIS fails to discuss reasonable alternatives to the proposed federal action. In particular, the EIS fails to discuss the alternative of funding a demonstration plant that incorporates CO_2 capture and storage as an integral part of the project's design and operation as a means of mitigating CO_2 emissions from this plant and from other such plants that may be stimulated by the proposed action. 26-1

Treatment of Carbon Dioxide (CO_2)

The EIS contends that "an increase in CO_2 emissions at a specific source is effective in altering CO_2 concentrations only to the extent that it contributes to the global total of fossil fuel burning that increases global CO_2 concentrations," arguing further that since the proposed plant's CO_2 emissions equate to only a small fraction of total global emissions that these new emissions are therefore not significant enough to merit further consideration. (EIS, 4-11) 26-2

:.org 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 400
Washington, DC 20005
202 289-6868 202 289-1060

NEW YORK • LOS ANGELES • SAN FRANCISCO

NRDC finds this argument problematic for several reasons. First, under such a test no individual source of CO_2 would ever have its emissions regulated given the improbability of a single source ever constituting a significant percentage of total global emissions. Second, DOE's argument does not reflect the current science about the implications that the increasing CO_2 concentrations have on climate change. The negative impact of CO_2 is due to the unnatural and accelerated rate at which it is being emitted into the atmosphere. Such emissions are attributed primarily to the burning of fossil fuels, a fact acknowledged by a DOE report cited in this EIS.[1] The US is the largest emitter of global warming gases accounting for roughly 25% of total global emissions. Of that amount, the coal fired electricity generating sector accounts for about a third, or roughly 8% of total global CO_2 emissions, making the Gilberton plant part of the single most significant CO_2 emitting sector worldwide. Third, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to which the United States is a party and which has the status of federal law, commits the federal government to consider the impacts of its decisions on emissions of greenhouse gases and includes a pledge to develop programs that aim to return anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to 1990 levels.[2] President Bush has reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to the UNFCCC's objective of "stabiliz[ing] atmospheric greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that will prevent dangerous human interference with the climate."[3]

Given these reasons, each source of CO_2 merits more serious consideration, particularly new sources supported by federal funds that represent a net increase in emissions. The Gilberton plant by itself will release an estimated 832,000 tons/year of CO_2 into the atmosphere which is the equivalent of adding 166,400 cars to the road. Such a large amount of CO_2 requires DOE to address these emissions and potential mitigation strategies more extensively.

26-2.1
26-2.2
26-2.3
26-2.4
26-2

NEPA Requirements

Numerous courts have now held that agencies must consider the contribution of potential projects or actions to global warming. This includes not only the impact of a particular project, but also an evaluation and consideration of the cumulative impacts on global warming that come from replication of the project or action under review.[4]

The draft EIS either lacks sufficient explanation of compliance or simply does not comply with NEPA guidelines in the following three areas:

---

[1] DOE (U.S. Department of Energy) 1989. Clean Coal Technology Demonstration Program, Final Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement, DOE/EIS-0146, Washington, D.C., November.

[2] United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), Art. 4, Para. 2, Cls. (a), (b); 138 Cong. Rec. 33521-27 (Oct. 7, 1992) (Senate ratification).

[3] Address by President George W. Bush to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (Feb. 14, 2002).

[4] See, e.g., Mid-States Coalition for Progress v. Surface Transp. Bd., 345 F.3d 520, 548-50 (8th Cir. 2003) (addressing a challenge to the approval by the Surface Transportation Board of a railroad to coal mines in Wyoming's Powder River Basin and holding that the EIS was inadequate because, inter alia, it failed to examine the reasonably foreseeable effect on global warming of the subsequent increase in coal consumption); Friends of the Earth v. Watson, 2005 WL 2035596, *2-6 (N.D. Cal. 2005) (case concerning global warming impacts of Overseas Private Investment Corporation ("OPIC") projects finding that the plaintiffs evidence of global warming and its potential impacts were sufficient to demonstrate a reasonable probability that the projects funded by the defendants would harm the plaintiffs' interests); Border Power Plant Working Group v. Dept of Energy, 260 F. Supp. 2d 997, 1028-29 (S.D. Cal. 2003) (addressing a challenge to a FONSI issued for California-Mexico border power plants permits and concluding that the agency had failed to provide adequate environmental analysis, in part because the EA failed to disclose and analyze the effects of carbon dioxide emissions as a greenhouse gas contributing to global warming).

1) *Programmatic EIS* – The courts have held that NEPA requires agencies to conduct EIS statements on research and development programs.[5] Although DOE conducted an EIS on the Clean Coal Technology Demonstration Program which was the precursor to CCPI, that EIS occurred nearly two decades ago and reflected a program focused on vastly different environmental challenges, something the CCPI website itself proclaims. CCPI is a research and development program based upon discovering the next generation of coal fired plant designs that could substantially impact the environment. The stated mission of CCPI is to invest in risky, advanced technology with the hopes of accelerating their introduction into the market by demonstrating a commercial sized version that garners environmental and economic benefits over existing coal technologies. The program itself has chosen a dozen technologies in which to invest at various locations around the US. Given the investments into these coal-fired energy production technologies that have previously not existed on the commercial scale, NEPA requires a programmatic EIS to determine the potential impacts of CCPI investments on the environment. Moreover, considering that the average operating life of a coal-fired power plant ranges from fifty to sixty years it is important for DOE to consider the projected lifetime emissions of the plants funded through CCPI. 26-3 26-4

2) *Cumulative Impacts* – Since the CCPI program chooses technologies that it hopes will catch on commercially, the EIS is required to include at least some reasonable degree of forecasting. In Scientists' Institute for Public Information, Inc. v. Atomic Energy Commission, the court concluded:

> To wait until a technology attains the stage of complete commercial feasibility before considering the possible adverse environmental effects attendant upon ultimate application of the technology will undoubtedly frustrate meaningful consideration and balancing of environmental costs against economic and other benefits.[6]

The draft EIS does not include any consideration of the cumulative impact of the specific technology proposed for the Gilberton plant. By undertaking a quick analysis of the Gilberton plant specifically, we can illustrate how this technology, when applied more broadly, would be worse in terms of CO_2 emissions. The Gilberton plant is designed not only to create electricity from waste coal through a gasification process, but to use Fischer-Tropsch (F-T) coal to liquid technology to produce liquid transportation fuel. Analysis indicates that the life cycle CO_2 emissions from these fuels will be substantially greater than comparable fuels made from crude oil. Moreover, as documented in a 2001 DOE study, the bulk of these emissions occur during the F-T production process.[7] 26-5

Based on a review of the production of fuel, electricity, and carbon dioxide reported in the EIS for the Gilberton plant, we find that the net fuel cycle emissions of the F-T liquids produced at the plant would be 35 to 60 percent *higher* than the comparable emissions from conventional gasoline or diesel fuel made from crude oil. The range depends on the emissions credit allocated to the electricity produced at the plant.[8] We believe that a reasonable benchmark is the emission rate of a natural gas combined cycle power plant since this is the most likely source of electricity to be displaced by the operation of such plants. Using this assumption, the fuel produced using the process summarized in the EIS would have 50 percent greater fuel cycle emissions than

---

[5] Scientists' Inst. for Pub. Info., Inc. v. Atomic Energy Comm'n, 481 F.2d 1079 (D.C. Cir. 1973) (case concerning the Commission choosing only to conduct an EIS on a specific nuclear plant instead of the larger R&D program under which it was funded. The court found that the entire program fell under NEPA and that an EIS of the program was necessary, stating further that an agency could not avoid drafting an impact statement even if it requires some forecasting.)

[6] Scientists' Inst. for Pub. Info., Inc. v. Atomic Energy Comm'n, 481 F.2d 1079 (D.C. Cir. 1973

[7] DOE. National Energy Technology Lab. "Life-Cycle Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory for Fischer-Tropsch Fuels". June 2001. Prepared by Energy and Environmental Solutions, LLP.

[8] The most favorable comparison credits the electricity generated at the emission rate of conventional coal; the least favorable credits the electricity at the emission rate of coal with carbon capture and disposal.

conventional gasoline. Even if a conventional coal plant emission rate is used as the benchmark, the fuel cycle emissions of all of the liquid fuel produced by this and similar plants (without CO_2 capture) would be 35 percent higher than gasoline from crude oil. Since one of the stated purposes of the proposed federal action is to facilitate broad application of the F-T process as a source of transportation fuels, the impacts of CO_2 increases resulting from introduction of a significant number of such plants must be addressed. A cumulative impact assessment is required to address how many such plants might be built if this demo project succeeds; what amount or fraction of oil supply might be replaced with F-T liquids; and what would be the resulting total CO_2 increase. 26-6

Peer-reviewed studies indicate that in order for greenhouse gas concentrations to stabilize soon enough to prevent dangerous climate change, "as much as 98% of the capital stock of U.S. fossil power plants would need to be replaced with state-of-the-art CO_2 capture and storage (CCS)-enabled power plants by the year 2050."[9] As aforementioned, considering that the operational life of a coal-fueled power plant is fifty to sixty years, federal action on the new coal-fueled plants currently being proposed without CCS (and without technologies that facilitate implementation of CCS) will have a significant impact on the ability of the federal government to meet its stabilization commitment. Federal law requires the United States government, as a partial means of meeting that commitment, to "[t]ake climate change considerations into account" in its "social, economic and environmental policies and actions."[10] 26-7

3) *Primary and Secondary Alternatives* – Though many primary alternatives such as renewable energy fall outside the scope of CCPI, that does not release DOE from needing to consider secondary alternatives that include alterations on the planned plant design aimed at mitigating the environmental impacts. In the case of the Gilberton plant, CCS technologies would help mitigate the impacts of the plant's CO_2 emissions. There is no consideration in the EIS of the option of mitigating CO_2 emissions by incorporating CCS into the plant design. Coal-based liquids, in particular F-T liquids, can be made with lower fuel cycle CO_2 emissions than conventional gasoline, but only if the CO_2 produced in the conversion process is captured and safely disposed of in an appropriate geologic formation. Very low net fuel cycle emissions (comparable to those from cellulosic ethanol or hydrogen made with CO_2 capture) can be achieved if some biomass is used as a feedstock along with coal in conjunction with carbon capture and disposal.

As the source of federal funds for the project, DOE is obligated to factor climate change considerations into its EIS for the Gilberton plant. The CCPI's goals of fostering commercially viable, environmentally acceptable technologies for coal generated energy cannot be met by ignoring the increased CO_2 emissions from demonstration projects and NRDC submits this technology cannot be demonstrated to be commercially viable and environmentally acceptable without demonstrating application of CCS as part of this project. It is evident that CCS technology is essential to achieve significant reductions in CO_2 emissions when using coal to produce power or fuel. Given the U.S. commitment to honor the Framework Convention's objective of stabilizing greenhouse gas concentrations, it is critical, given limited resources and limited timeframes for effective action, to include CCS from the start.

Adding carbon capture to this project is compatible with DOE's existing CCS programs. Consideration of this alternative is particularly appropriate given the government's funding of Regional Carbon Sequestration Partnerships. A component of those partnerships is to demonstrate large-scale injection of CO_2 into geologic formations. As is obvious from the EIS, the Gilberton plant is a large new source of CO_2 that could supply a geologic storage demonstration project in Pennsylvania. By integrating these programs, the federal government

[9] J.J. Dooley, *et al.*, Accelerated Adoption of Carbon Dioxide Capture and Storage Within the United States Electric Utility Industry: The Impact of Stabilizing at 450 PPMV and 550 PPMV, Seventh International Conference on Greenhouse Gas Control Technologies (GHGT7) (Dec. 3, 2004)
[10] UNFCCC, Art. 4, Para. 1, Cl. (f).

could use taxpayer dollars more efficiently, demonstrate F-T technology that manages greenhouse gases, and avoid the CO_2 emissions associated with this project and others modeled on it.

The technology proposed for the Gilberton plant will make global warming worse unless the carbon dioxide produced at such plants is captured and safely disposed of. Since CCPI aims to accelerate the next generation of cleaner coal technologies into commercial viability and DOE has a potentially willing partner in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, we urge that this action be modified to incorporate carbon capture and geologic disposal in the project design and operation. 26-8

Thank you for considering these comments. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, either at the address or telephone number that appears on the first page.

Sincerely,

David Doniger
Policy Director, Climate Center

Doniger, David (26)

Comment 26-1

"[T]he EIS fails to discuss the alternative of funding a demonstration plant that incorporates CO_2 capture and storage as an integral part of the project's design and operation as a means of mitigating CO_2 emissions from this plant and from other such plants may be stimulated by the proposed action.

Response:

Section 4.2 of the EIS has been revised to discuss the possibility of CO_2 capture and storage as part of the project's design and operation. New Section 5.1.4 describes the potential long-term impacts resulting from possible CO_2 capture and storage over a potential project lifetime of 50 years. Finally, Section 6.1 has been modified to discuss the potential cumulative impacts under a range of scenarios simulating multiple coal-to-liquids facilities with CO_2 capture and storage, assuming a successful demonstration of the proposed facilities.

Comment 26-2

"The EIS contends that "an increase in CO_2 emissions at a specific source is effective in altering CO_2 concentrations only to the extent that it contributes to the global total of fossil fuel burning that increases global CO_2 concentrations," arguing further that since the proposed plant's CO2 emissions equate to only a small fraction of total global emissions that these new emissions are therefore not significant enough to merit further consideration. (EIS, 4-11).

"NRDC finds this argument problematic for several reasons .First, under such a test no individual source of CO_2 would ever have its emissions regulated given the improbability of a single source ever constituting a significant percentage of total global emissions .Second, DOE's argument does not reflect the current science about the implications that increasing concentrations have on climate change. The negative impact of CO_2 is due to the unnatural and accelerated rate at which it is being emitted into the atmosphere. Such emissions are attributed primarily to the burning of fossil fuels, a fact acknowledged by a DOE report cited in this EIS. The U.S. is the largest emitter of global warming gases accounting for roughly 25% of total global or roughly 8% of total global CO_2 emissions, making the Gilberton plant part of the single most significant CO2 emitting sector worldwide .Third, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), to which the United States is a party and which has the status of federal law, commits the federal government to consider the impacts of its decisions on emissions of greenhouse gases and includes a pledge to develop programs that aim to return anthropogenic emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases to 1990 levels.

Given these reasons, each source of CO_2 merits more serious consideration, particularly new resources supported by federal funds that represent a new increase in emissions. The Gilberton plant by itself will release an estimated 832, 000 tons/year of CO2 into the atmosphere which is the equivalent of adding 166,400 cars to the road. Such a large amount of CO_2 requires DOE to address these emissions and potential mitigation strategies more extensively."

Response:

The Clean Coal Power Initiative (CCPI) is a government/industry partnership that implements the President's National Energy Policy recommendation to increase investment in clean coal technology. This commitment to clean coal is in response to the nation's challenge of enhancing its electricity supply and availability brought on by the growing electricity demand. The CCPI focuses on the demonstration of emerging clean coal technologies and their accelerated deployment to commercialization. This project would demonstrate a technology that is "CO_2 sequestration ready," which is a step toward anthropogenic CO_2 reduction. Research is being conducted under another DOE program to determine the best method(s) for carbon sequestration. The combination of CCPI, advanced technologies from core research and development, and carbon sequestration research will collectively help assure that a reliable and affordable supply of electricity will be available from coal, while limiting CO_2 emissions to the atmosphere.

The relative comparison to global emissions was not intended to convey a judgment about the significance of potential impacts. Because it is not possible to quantify the impacts on global climate change resulting from the proposed project (for example, meaningfully estimate potential incremental increase in global temperature resulting from the proposed action), DOE sought in the draft EIS to provide a perspective.

In response to this comment, DOE has revised EIS Section 4.1.2.2 to present estimates of CO_2 emissions only in absolute terms, and has eliminated similar relative comparisons throughout the EIS. EIS Section 4.1.2.2 also has been revised to reflect new information on CO_2 emissions and to correct an error in the estimated rate of CO_2 emissions reported in the Draft EIS. The predicted emissions from the proposed facilities have been increased from 832,000 tons per year to 2,278,000 tons per year, as a consequence of including the concentrated CO_2 stream coming from the Rectisol unit. DOE has revised Section 6.1 to analyze potential cumulative impacts that may result if the project is successful in stimulating development of the technologies proposed to be demonstrated .New Section 5.1.4 discusses the possibility of carbon sequestration. DOE circulated this information to the public for comment in a Supplement to the Draft EIS.

Comment 26-3

Given the investments into these coal-fired energy production technologies that have previously not existed on the commercial scale, NEPA requires a programmatic EIS to determine the potential impacts of CCPI investments on the environment."

Response:

The DOE prepared a Programmatic EIS in the 1980's to address the complexity and impacts of the Clean Coal Technology (CCT) Program – the predecessor to the Clean Coal Power Initiative (CCPI). The Programmatic EIS, along with later project-specific environmental reviews and operational experience under the CCT, PPII, and CCPI programs, provided valuable information and insight to DOE. DOE does not believe a PEIS is required or warranted for CCPI.

Nevertheless, Section 6.1 of the EIS has been expanded to address the potential cumulative impacts of wide utilization of coal-to-clean fuels projects. To ensure that members of the public would have an opportunity to comment on the implications of potential large-scale deployment of coal-to-liquid technology, DOE circulated this information in a Supplement to the Draft EIS.

Comment 26-4

"Moreover, considering that the average operating life of a coal-fired power plant ranges from fifty to sixty years it is important for DOE to consider the projected lifetime emissions of the plants funded through CCPI."

Response:

In response to comments, the expected lifetime of the proposed facilities has been increased to 50 years, including the demonstration period.

Comment 26-5

"The draft EIS does not include any consideration of the cumulative impact of the specific technology proposed for the Gilberton plant. By undertaking a quick analysis of the Gilberton plant specifically, we can illustrate how this technology, when applied more broadly, would be worse in terms of CO_2 emissions"

Response:

Cumulative effects on CO_2 emissions are discussed in EIS Sections 4.1.2.2, 5.1, and 6.1.

Comment 26-6

"Since one of the stated purposes of the proposed federal action is to facilitate broad application of the F-T process as a source of transportation fuels, the impacts of CO_2 increases resulting from introduction of a significant number of such plants must be addressed. A cumulative impact assessment is required to address how many such plants might be built if this demo project succeeds; what amount or fraction of oil supply might be replaced with F-T liquids; and what would be the resulting total CO_2 increase".

Response:

The potential impacts of commercial operation and potential broad-scale application of coal-to-liquids technology have been addressed in revised EIS Sections 5.1 and 6.1.

Comment 26-7

"[C]onsidering that the operational life of a coal-fueled plant is fifty to sixty years, federal action on the new coal-fueled plants currently being proposed without CCS (and without technologies that facilitate implementation of CCS) will have a significant impact on the ability of the federal government to meet its stabilization commitment. "

Response:

The proposed project would incorporate CO_2 capture (that is, the generation of a segregated CO_2 stream), which is the first step of carbon capture and storage (CCS). Thus, the possibility would exist to add CO_2 storage at a later time as the necessary technology matures. Also see the response to comment 26-8.

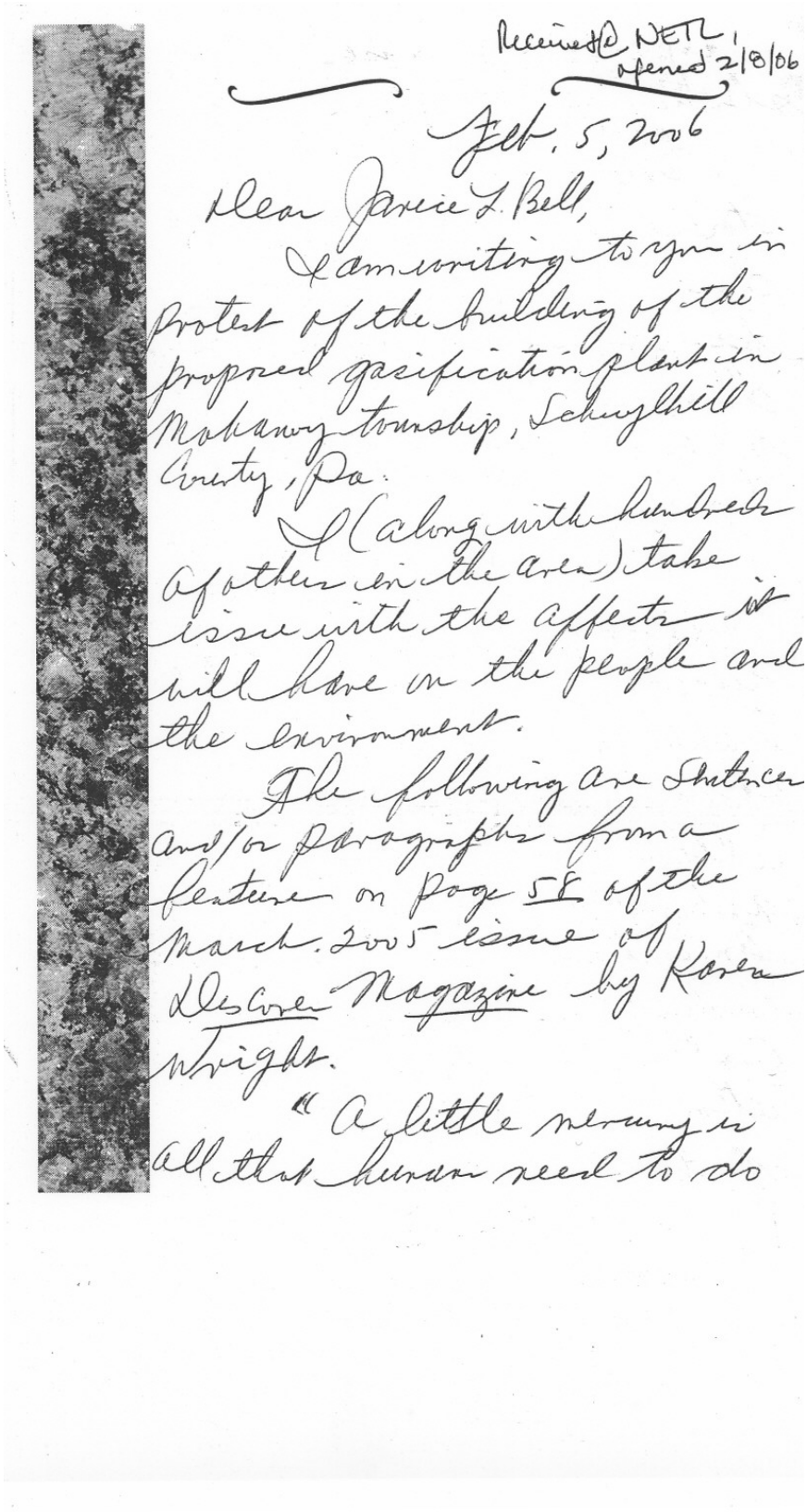
Comment 26-8

"The technology proposed for the Gilberton plant will make global warming worse unless the carbon dioxide produced by such plants is captured and safely disposed of. Since CCPI aims to accelerate the next generation of cleaner coal technologies into commercial viability

and DOE has a potentially willing partner in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. We urge that this action be modified to incorporate carbon capture and geologic disposal in the project design and operation."

Response:

The proposed facilities would capture a segregated CO_2 stream that would be potentially available for geologic sequestration. However, CO_2 sequestration was not part of the project as proposed to DOE by the CCPI program participant. As the response to comment S10-9 explains, under the CCPI program DOE's role is limited to approving or disapproving the project as proposed by the participant. Furthermore, the necessary technology for geologic carbon sequestration is not sufficiently mature to be implemented during the demonstration period for the proposed facilities. However, the possibility would exist to add CO_2 storage at a later time as the necessary technology matures. A discussion of possibilities for geologic carbon sequestration during future commercial operation of the proposed facilities has been added to Section 5.1.4.



Received NETL, opened 2/8/06

Feb. 5, 2006

Dear Janice L. Bell,

I am writing to you in protest of the building of the proposed gasification plant in Mahanoy township, Schuylkill County, Pa.

I (along with hundreds of others in the area) take issue with the affects it will have on the people and the environment.

The following are statistics and/or paragraphs from a feature on page 58 of the March 2005 issue of Discover Magazine by Karen Wright.

"A little nerve is all that human need to do

27-1

27-2

away with themselves quietly, slowly, and surely.

Mercury is unimaginably toxic and dangerous. A single drop on a human hand can be irreversibly fatal. A single drop in a large lake can make all the fish in it unsafe to eat.

Sources of Mercury Release:

During the last 150 years, human activities may have doubled or tripled natural amounts of mercury in the atmosphere. Although there are many natural sources of mercury emissions, there are also numerous industrial sources such as coal combustion, waste incineration and mixing. The greatest contributors are (coal fired)

27-2

utilities and industrial boilers, which account for about 50 percent of the transmission of inorganic mercury to the atmosphere."

After having read this information plus the fact that there are also (3) Co-generation plants in the immediate area within a few miles of each other, plus one more further north of this area - a few miles. I feel very strongly that it should not be built here, and further research done before it is built anywhere.

27-2

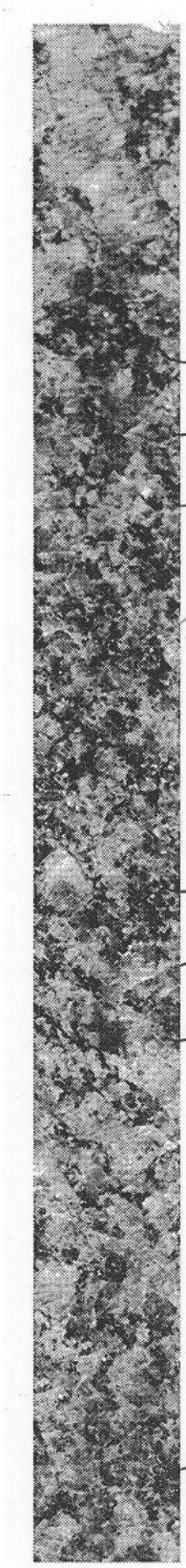
27-3

Toxic emissions and global warming are very real threats to this planet. Every responsible adult should be concerned about finding a solution to these problems instead of adding to them.

Taxpayer money would be wisely spent to find new and positive sources of energy that don't pollute.

I realize creating jobs is important, but it can be done without creating serious environmental hazards.

In spite of what many say, this area is not so work deprived. Anyone wanting employment can find it within



20 or 30 miles.

Northern Schuylkill County has been a dumping ground for decades with projects no others want in their area. I.E. landfills, prisons, and Co-Generation plants. Always using the X or Red Tape Argument, big business usually gets its way. The time to stop exploiting this area is long overdue.

Please find also Clippings pertaining to this issue enclosed.

Thank you very much for your time and Consideration on this important issue.

In making a decision I hope the health and environmental issues will guide your conscience.

Respectfully,

Joan C DeSantis

210 Arizona Avenue

Shenandoah Heights,

Pa.

17976

No satisfaction

Health study draws criticism

BY SHAWN A. HESSINGER
Tamaqua Bureau Chief
shessinger@republicanherald.com

HOMETOWN — They came to hear the results of a health study 15 months in the making.

In the end, though, more than 250 people whose cars filled the parking lot at the Hometown Fire Company, spilling over onto an adjacent field and basketball court, seemed disappointed by what they heard.

"I'm not very happy about it. I thought we would get some answers," said wheelchair-bound Betty Kester, who sat near the front of the crowded fire company social hall listening to a presentation by the Pennsylvania Department of Health.

In June 2004, an environmental group reported that Kester and three others, including her husband, Lester, and a neighbor living along Ben Titus Road in Rush Township, had all contracted a rare, blood-thickening cancer called polycythemia vera.

The announcement touched off alarm because of the close proximity of the former McAdoo Associates site where, between 1978 and 1979, an estimated 7,000 drums and six above-ground tanks contained volatile organic compounds, according to an Environmental Protection Agency Web site.

"People with this condition have thick blood, and it's so thick that they have strokes," said Dr. Gene

Please see HEALTH/Page 4

ANDY MATSKO/St

Pat Tracy, Hometown, expresses her dissatisfaction Wednesday with the summary of a study undertaken by the Department of He the incidence of cancer in the Tamaqua

POTTSVILLE (PA.) REPUBLICAN & HERALD

YOUR VIEWS

Coal-to-oil plant issue is environmental one

To the Editor:

I am writing in response to the editorial about the coal-to-oil plant.

First of all, to attack ActionPA for getting involved in a Schuylkill County issue is ridiculous. Unfortunately, the residents of this county are so apathetic when it comes to environmental issues — or any issue for that matter — that we should be thankful that anyone is looking out for our health and well-being.

The information that has been brought to light by opponents of this plant is very relevant, and also based on scientific information.

Some of those concerns include mercury levels, which are guaranteed to increase. We are one of only three states that have had restrictions put on the amount of stream fish that should be consumed. It is no coincidence that these states also are the three that have the most landfills, co-gen plants and similar plants that release toxins into the air, much like this proposed plant.

It is true that this area is in dire need of jobs, but this is not the way to do it. No one is saying that the union people who attended the meetings should not have work.

This issue is environmental, and can potentially affect everyone in Schuylkill County, including the union workers. Many of the potential jobs will only be temporary until the plant is constructed, but health problems caused may be forever.

If there is even a potential risk of cancer, water and air contamination, why take the chance?

Until its developers can guarantee me 100 percent that there will be no harm from this plant, I will continue to oppose it. They cannot make this guarantee because it will be the only one like it. They have no precedent to follow or research to refer to.

Once again, residents of Schuylkill County will be the guinea pigs. Don't we already have enough landfills, co-gen plants, etc., to release enough toxins into our air and water?

To imply that not many people in the area are opposed to this was wrong. Just because we did not make a scene or show up in droves at the meetings does not mean that it is not being opposed in other ways out of the public eye.

With a bit of research into this plant, it is not hard to see that the "potential" harm could be devastating. Money is only material, and the jobs are temporary, but our air and water, if contaminated, will never be the same.

Think about your children and grandchildren and generations to come. Who is looking out for them?

Taryn Fatula
Saint Clair

It was standing room only Wednesday at the Hometown Fire Company as concerned citizens gathered to hear the conclusions of a study that looked at the incidence of cancer in the Tamaqua area.

ANDY MATSKO/Staff Photos

Health study draws fire

HEALTH/From Page 1

Weinberg, an epidemiologist with the Department of Health as Kester looked on in silence.

Weinberg insisted the state's study had not showed a statistically higher rate of the rare cancer in Schuylkill County than the state average, nor, he said, was a causal agent known for the disease.

However, one member of the audience, Dante J. Picciano, a West Penn Township patent attorney and environmental activist, presented other statistics.

Picciano, who holds a doctorate in genetics, served as former scientific director for Biogenics Corp., Houston, Texas, and supervised a study on the now-famous Love Canal community where a chemical company dumped 21,800 tons of pesticides and other potentially hazardous materials in steel drums near Niagara, N.Y., in one of the most famous environmental contamination cases in U.S. history.

Picciano said data from the National Cancer Institute and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention showed that Schuylkill and Luzerne counties combined have 2.3 times the normal rate of polycythemia vera when compared to the national average.

He said the rate of cervical cancer in Schuylkill County is nearly twice the national average, while the rate of colorectal cancer is 71.5 cases per 100,000 as compared to a national average of 53.1 cases per 100,000.

"We're not trying to force the outcome. You are trying to force the outcome. This is a no spin zone," Picciano said.

The health department study, which compares cancer rates in Schuylkill, Carbon and Luzerne counties to the state rather than national average, says the four most common cancers, prostate, breast, colon-rectum and lung, account for 55.4 percent of cases as compared to 56.5 percent of cases statewide.

However, residents balked at the suggestion that lifestyle rather than environment was to blame for health problems in the region.

Jean Wargo of Haddock Kline Township, said most residents in northern Schuylkill County live in close proximity to six cogeneration plants and three Superfund sites.

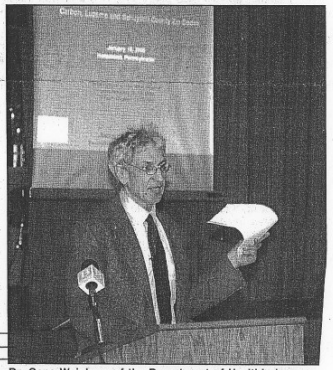
"We're not getting sick from all this? It's because we smoke or we don't watch our diet? I think there's something wrong with this study," Wargo said.

Dr. Peter Baddick, a West Penn Township physician, suggested a more detailed causal study be done in the area after showing photos of what he described as a 17-inch large mouth bass with a tumorcaught at Tamaqua's 2.7 billion-gallon Still Creek Reservoir.

The reservoir borders Ben Titus Road where the Kesters reside and is also just over a mile from the McAdoo Associates site, where Baddick has said thousands of gallons of contaminants may have been poured into underground mine workings before authorities took action.

Brian Connely, chairman of the Tamaqua Area Water Authority, which operat the Still Creek Reservo said the authority spe $3,000 on a study of the v ter and was open to furth suggestions.

State Rep. David G. gall, R-124, and state S James J. Rhoades, R-29, sured residents they, wo seek funding for a more tailed study if experts agree on a method.



Dr. Gene Weinberg of the Department of Health's bureau o epidemiology summarizes the report for those in attendanc at the fire company.

POTTSVILLE (PA.) REPUBLICAN & HERALD

YOUR VIEWS

Take politics out of coal-to-oil issue

To the Editor:

It has been said that if you have your health, you have everything. With that in mind, I'd like to address my health concerns regarding the proposed coal-to-gasification plant to be built in Schuylkill County.

I am not a scientist. I am an educator, and what I see day in and day out in school concerns me.

Many more children nowadays seem to suffer from asthma. Far too many children have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD, both of which have been linked in some of the research to increased mercury levels in our environment.

Faculty and children alike have been afflicted with cancer.

Is this anything new for our area? I really don't have a definitive answer for that. What I do know is that family physicians, school nurses and hospital doctors should have that type of information.

Perhaps the Department of Energy can survey those professionals on the frequency of these diseases now that the co-generation plants have been in existence for some time.

Surely there are facts regarding the health issues in Schuylkill County prior to the co-gens as well as statistics that reflect our current and not-so-distant levels of health.

Through my observances and experiences, I believe there has been an increase in health problems after the co-gens came on the scene, but if studies show differently, I'd gladly stand corrected.

Now we are talking about yet another smokestack plant. Many people young and old alike have concerns. Many people have questions.

The report generated by the DOE regarding the coal-to-gasification plant is far from conclusive with respect to health concerns. Are we willing to take chances with our air and water?

We have an elderly population in Schuylkill County many of whom already have breathing problems. I watched my dad die from emphysema so I speak from personal experience. There can't be much worse than watching someone struggle for each breath.

I attended the public meeting in Shenandoah Valley. I listened to the cry for jobs.

Having a father and husband who had plants close on them, I understand the need for jobs. The construction jobs created by this plant will come and go, but the health issues will last for generations.

Before we add another major plant, let's look at the pollutants in a cumulative way. Let's study what health issues we had before the co-gens arrived and what we have after. Let's take the politics out of it, and use an open mind before we decide one way or the other.

Marylou Henninger
Frackville

Doctor: Medication to blame in boy's death

PITTSBURGH (AP) — A 5-year-old autistic boy died because the wrong medication was administered during a controversial treatment for the disorder, a doctor at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

Abubakar Tariq Nadama, Monroeville, died Aug. 23 in his doctor's office because he was given the wrong medication, not because of the therapy itself, Dr. Mary Jean Brown said Tuesday.

Chelation therapy involves injecting a synthetic amino acid called EDTA into the body, which is supposed to clean out heavy metals from the bloodstream so they can be dispelled through urine.

Some parents and doctors believe autism is caused by heavy metals. The FDA has approved chelation for treatment of lead and heavy metal poisoning, but not to treat autism, because it is considered risky.

Chesonis, Joan (27)

Comment 27-1
"I am writing to you in protest of the building of the proposed gasification plant in Mahanoy Township, Schuylkill County, PA"

Response:
Your response has been noted.

Comment 27-2
"The following are sentences and/or paragraphs from a feature on page 58 of the March 2005 issue of *Discover Magazine* by Karen Wright.
"A little mercury is all that humans need to do away with themselves quietly, slowly, and surely.
Mercury is unimaginably toxic and dangerous. A single drop on a human hand can be irreversibly fatal. A single drop in a large lake can make all the fish in it unsafe to eat.

Sources of Mercury Release:
During the last 150 years, human activities may have doubled or tripled natural amounts of mercury in the atmosphere. Although there are many natural sources of mercury emissions, there are also numerous industrial sources such as coal combustion, waste incineration and mining. The greatest contributors are (coal-fired) utilities and industrial boilers, which account for about 50 percent of the transmission of inorganic mercury to the atmosphere."

Response:
The potential health effects of the proposed project have been discussed in Section 4.1.9.

Comment 27-3
"After having read this information, plus the fact that there are also 3 Co-generation plants in the immediate area within a few miles of each other, plus one more farther north of this area – a few miles. I feel very strongly that it should not be built here, and further research be done before it is built anywhere."

Response:
The comment has been noted .See response to Comment S3-3.

Received @ NETL
Opened on 2/8/06

February 4, 2006

Ms. Janice Bell
National Energy Technology Laboratory
P.O. Box 10940
Pittsburgh PA 15236

Dear Ms. Bell:

It has been said that if you have your health, you have everything. With that in mind, I'd like to address my health concerns regarding the proposed coal-to-gasification plant to be built in Schuylkill County.

I am not a scientist. I am an educator, and what I see day in and day out in school concerns me. Many more children nowadays seem to suffer from asthma. Far too many children have been diagnosed with ADD or ADHD, both of which have been linked in some of the research to increased mercury levels in our environment. We have also seen cases of leukemia. Is this anything new for our area? I really don't have a definitive answer for that. What I do know is that family physicians, school nurses and hospital doctors should have that type of information. Perhaps the DOE can survey those professionals on the frequency of these diseases now that the co-generation plants have been in existence for some time. Surely there are facts regarding the health issues in Schuylkill County prior to the co-gens as well as statistics that reflect our current and not-so-distant levels of health. Through my observances and experiences, I believe there has been an increase in health problems after the co-gens came on the scene, but if studies show differently, I'd gladly stand corrected. 28-1

Now we are talking about yet another smokestack plant. Many people young and old alike have concerns. Many people have questions. The report generated by the DOE regarding the coal-to-gasification plant is far from conclusive with respect to health concerns. Are we willing to take chances with our air and water? What kinds of definite statistics has the DOE generated??? In the report, I read only supposition. 28-2

We have an elderly population in Schuylkill County many of whom already have breathing problems. I watched my dad die from emphysema so I speak

from personal experience. There can't be much worse than watching someone struggle for each breath.

Again, before we add another major plant, let's look at the pollutants in a cumulative way. I don't want to know what I'm breathing from one area co-gen plant. I want to know what I'm breathing from all of them combined. 28-3

The study needs to focus on health issues we had before the co-gens arrived and what we have after. Let's take the politics out of it, and use an open mind before we decide own way or the other. 28-4

In addition, what plan exists for emergency management in the event of a serious problem at the plant? Are there plans for evacuation of homes, nearby schools, prisons etc. I didn't read of any. There are many unanswered questions. 28-5

We don't need another smokestack plant, we need to get rid of the ones we have. 28-6

Wayne and Marylou Henninger
239 Morea Road
Frackville, PA 17931

Henninger, Wayne and Marylou (28)

Comment 28-1

"Perhaps the DOE can survey those professionals on the frequency of these diseases now that the co-generation plants have been in existence for some time. Surely there are facts regarding the health issues in Schuylkill County prior to the co-gens as well as statistics that reflect our current and not-so-distant levels of health. Through my observations and experiences, I believe there has been an increase in health problems after the co-gens came on the scene, but if studies show differently, I'd gladly stand corrected."

Response:

DOE analyzed the potential health effects of the proposed project (discussed in Section 4.1.9). However, DOE did not perform a general study of health issues in Schuylkill County.

Comment 28-2

"The report generated by the DOE regarding the coal-to-gasification plant is far from conclusive with respect to health concerns. Are we willing to take chances with our air and water? What kinds of definite statistics has the DOE generated? In the report, I read only supposition."

Response:

Potential health effects of the proposed project are discussed in Section 4.1.9 .See also the response to Comment S2-1.

Comment 28-3

"Again, before we add another major plant, let's look at the pollutants in a cumulative way. I don't want to know what I'm breathing from all of them combined."

Response:

Potential cumulative impacts are discussed in Section 6 .See also the response to Comment S3-3.

Comment 28-4

"The study needs to focus on health issues we had before the co-gens arrived and what we have after."

Response:

See response to Comment S3-5.

Comment 28-5

"In addition, what plan exists for emergency management in the event of a serious problem at the plant? Are there plans for evacuation of homes, nearby schools, prisons, etc."

Response:

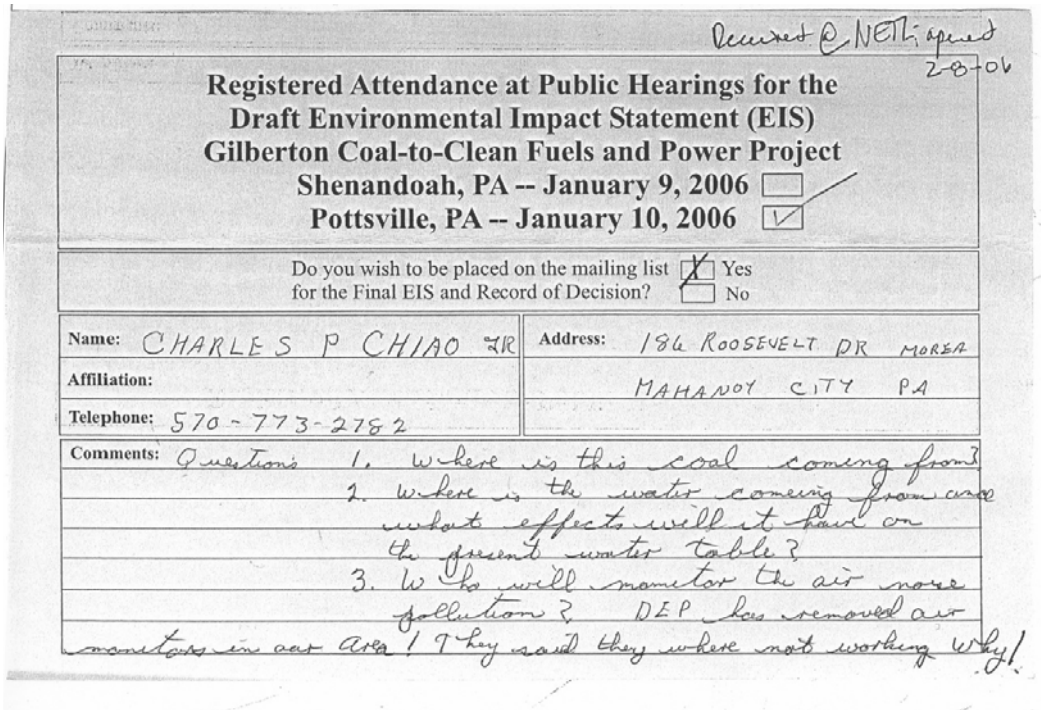
Sect. 4.1.9.1 has been revised in response to this comment to more clearly describe the plan and program for emergencies, which might arise from plant operations. The Emergency Response Program, which will be incorporated into the Risk Management Plan, will address

the approach to be taken for plant emergencies. This program has yet to be developed and will be submitted to the EPA prior to plant operations as part of compliance with 40 CFR 68.

As noted in Section 4.1.7.5, Schuylkill County Emergency Management Agency, in conjunction with Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, is in the process of developing a hazardous mitigation plan for Schuylkill County that will address evacuation of homes. This plan is to address the hazards most likely to affect the county and pose a threat to its inhabitants from hazardous materials, transportation, and wildfires. For evacuation of schools and prisons, see the response to comments in S2-5 and S2-6.

Comment 28-6
"We don't need another smokestack plant, we need to get rid of the ones we have."

Response:
The comments have been noted.



Received @ NETL 2-8-06

Registered Attendance at Public Hearings for the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Gilberton Coal-to-Clean Fuels and Power Project

Shenandoah, PA -- January 9, 2006 ☐

Pottsville, PA -- January 10, 2006 ☑

Do you wish to be placed on the mailing list for the Final EIS and Record of Decision? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Name: CHARLES P CHIAO JR

Address: 186 ROOSEVELT DR MOREA MAHANOY CITY PA

Affiliation:

Telephone: 570-773-2782

Comments: Questions 1. Where is this coal coming from?
2. Where is the water coming from and what effects will it have on the present water table?
3. Who will monitor the air noise pollution? DEP has removed air monitors in our area! They said they where not working why!

29-1

29-2

29-3

Chiao Jr., Charles P. (29)

Comment 29-1
"Where is this coal coming from?"

Response:
Coal to fuel the proposed facilities would be derived from anthracite culm obtained from the surrounding local area. Section 3.3.3 includes information about local culm resources.

Comment 29-2
"Where is the water coming from and what effects will it have on the present water table?"

Response:
Water for the proposed facilities would be obtained from the Gilberton mine pool. Withdrawals from the mine pool would not affect the elevation of the water table in aquifers that supply local water-supply wells. Also see the response to comment 21-2.

Comment 29-3
"Who will monitor the air, noise pollution?" DEP has removed air monitors in our area! They said they were not working. Why?"

Response:
The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection has recently installed a PM-10 monitor at the Mahanoy State Correctional Institution adjacent to the proposed

facilities to measure ambient PM-10 concentrations. In addition, high-volume particulate samplers to measure ambient concentrations of metals (i.e., arsenic, cadmium, chrome, nickel, and lead) and total suspended particles have recently been installed by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection at the Mahanoy State Correctional Institution, the Mahanoy City Sewage Treatment Plant, and the Frackville State Correctional Institution. All samplers began running on the same day (May 9, 2006) on a 6-day cycle (i.e., operating for one 24-hour period every sixth day). The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection does not monitor for noise .Noise and air pollution prevention and control measures that WMPI would provide are listed in EIS Table 4.2.1.

Received @ NETL
Opened 2/8/06

Feb.5,2006

From: Thomas N. Flannery 234 East Main Street, Girardville, Pa. Phone 570- 462-2933 or 570-276-1741 (Secretary of the Mahanoy Creek Watershed Association).

Re: Comments on The Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Gilberton Coal to-Clean Fuels and Power Project.

(1) Throughout the EIS session in Shenandoah Pa., union work was eltivated to an all time high. Gilberton Coal has tried and succeeded to break the United Mine Workers at all its jobs. None of the jobs that would be feeding the plant its feedstock would be union.
(2) Is it true that because federal money is involved,that they have to use union labor? 30-1
(3) Summary section XVIII and XVIX- Will the 100 million tons of low cost anthracite culm they plan to remove and the 1,000 acres that they plan to reclaim be conducted under a surface mining permit and be bonded accordingly? 30-2
(4) Summary Section- Shouldn't real figures not conservative assumptions be used in the analysis. 30-3
(5) Summary-GeologyXXI- I believe that the possibility of an abrupt subsidences will increase by pumping the mine pool not decrease. This pumping of the mine pool will not only increase the chances of affecting the product line,but peoples homes, roadways, private property etc. 30-4
(6) Why would a facility that costs so much money, have only a 26 year lifespan.
(7) 7-5 The facility would require an NPDES Permit from the DEP. The report indicates that a new set of effluent standards would be established for the new facility. Why a new set? Shouldn't the new standards that the DEP will issue be included in this statement. 30-6
(8) The Mahanoy Creek watershed association is currently doing AMD remediation projects down stream and continue to do projects in the future. Will this plant have any affect on these projects? 30-7

Thank You ,
Thomas N Flannery
Secretary , Mahanoy Creek
Watershed Association
Thomas N Flannery

Flannery, Thomas N. (30)

Comment 30-1
"Is it true that because federal money is involved, that they have to use union labor?"

Response:
There is no requirement that the project use union labor.

Comment 30-2
"Summary section XVIII and XVIX- Will the 100 million tons of low cost anthracite culm they plan to remove and the 1,000 acres that they plan to reclaim be conducted under a surface mining permit and be bonded accordingly?"

Response:
Acquisition of anthracite culm and reclamation of mined areas would occur in accordance with Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regulatory requirements, either under a mining permit or under a government-financed construction contract allowing the acquisition of coal in exchange for land reclamation and abatement of mine drainage. Financial assurance in the form of a performance bond or liability insurance would be consistent with applicable Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection regulations and technical guidance. See Section 7.2 for further information.

Comment 30-3
"Summary Section – Shouldn't real figures, not conservative assumptions be used in the analysis?"

Response:
See the response to comment S2-1.

Comment 30-4
"Summary – Geology XXI-I believe that the possibility of an abrupt subsidence will increase by pumping the mine pool not decrease. This pumping of the mine pool will not only increase the chances of affecting the product line, but people's homes, roadways, private property, etc."

Response:
Section 4.1.3.3 addresses the potential for the proposed project to increase the chance of ground surface subsidence over the Gilberton mine pool. The discussion has been revised in the final EIS and includes discussion of possible impacts to homes, roads, and other properties. Also see the response to comment P11-4.

Comment 30-5
"Why would a facility that costs so much money have only a 26 year lifespan?"

Response:
In the EIS analyses, the expected life of the facility has been revised to 50 years.

Comment 30-6

"7-5 The facility would require an NPDES Permit from the DEP. The report indicates that a new set of effluent standards would be established for the new facility. Why a new set? Shouldn't the new standards that the DEP will issue be included in this statement?"

Response:

Under the Clean Water Act, each NDPES discharge permit contains a set of effluent limits that are specific for that permit. Establishment of effluent standards by the regulatory agency is based on several factors, including the nature of the activity that generates the effluent; the pollutants present in the effluent; the technologies available for reducing, eliminating, or treating the effluent discharge; the water quality of the body of water receiving the discharge; and the impact of the discharge on receiving water quality. An existing set of effluent limits, such as that used for the Gilberton Power Plant discharge, would not be appropriate for a new facility with different processes that could generate different types and volumes of wastewaters containing different pollutants.

Consistent with Council on Environmental Quality regulations and guidance for the NEPA process, this EIS was prepared and published before detailed engineering design and process testing. Additional process design and testing would be required by Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection as a basis for regulatory decisions on environmental permits for the proposed facility, including decisions on the effluent limits to be specified in an NPDES permit. WMPI provided a set of proposed effluent limits to the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection in October 2005; consequently, DOE revised Section 4.1.4 to include assessment of the potential impacts of those proposed effluent limits.

Comment 30-7

"The Mahanoy Creek watershed association is currently doing AMD remediation projects downstream and continue to do projects in the future. Will this plant have any affect on these projects?"

Response:

EIS Section 6.2, Cumulative Effects, Water Resources, discusses the interaction between the proposed project and ongoing efforts by the Mahanoy Creek Watershed Association and other groups to remediate acid mine drainage and improve water quality. As discussed in that section, the proposed project is expected to contribute to achieving the objectives of these ongoing watershed remediation projects, by reducing the discharge of mine pool water to Mahanoy Creek, removing anthracite culm piles, and reclaiming mined lands. However, as discussed in Sections 4.1.4.1 and 4.1.6.2, effluents from the proposed facilities could cause new adverse effects on aquatic habitats.